

PART VI

Livestock, Dairying and Poultry

General Importance

Dairying and poultry farming are the major agricultural activities in Clark County. In the 1954 Census of Agriculture, dairy farms numbered 617 and poultry, 220. Clark was fourth among Washington counties in numbers of dairy farms and seventh in poultry farms. About 200 farms raised livestock other than dairy animals and poultry. A total of 1,037 or about 25 percent of all the farms depended mainly on livestock and poultry for the major part of their income. The value of all animals and animal products marketed by farmers in 1954 was \$6,068,100 compared with \$2,221,600 received for all crops. Livestock farmers receive over two-thirds of all the gross receipts for farm products. Dairy products alone made up over 39 percent of farm commercial sales in 1954. Clark ranks fifth in the state in total value of whole milk and butterfat sold and its poultry sales rank seventh.

Total Value of Clark County Livestock: \$4,488,701

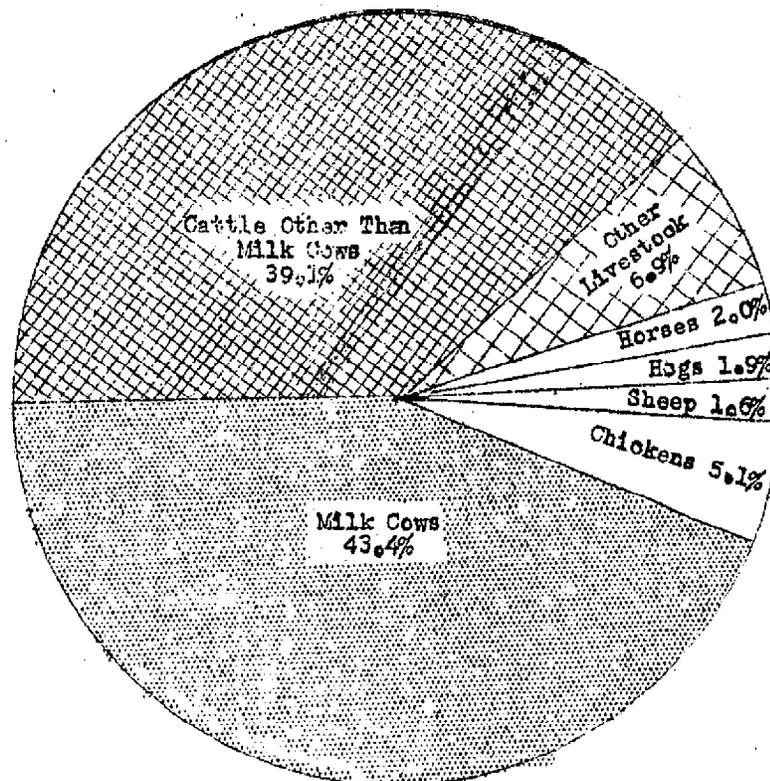


Figure 11.- Value of Livestock on Farms
Clark County, 1950.
(Based on U.S. Census, Agriculture)

Livestock Trends

Measured by number and type of animals, livestock raising has changed considerably since 1920. The value of livestock has become greater and general increases have been made in dairy and beef cattle, sheep and chickens. As part of the Portland milkshed with an expanding fluid milk consumer market, dairying has grown greatly since 1939. The cattle population reached new highs by 1956 and values compared with 1920 are nearly four times greater. The total estimated value of cattle on farms was about \$4,500,000 in 1954. Cattle on farms increased from 29,600 head in 1939 to 41,000 in 1956. Beef cattle have increased on livestock farms since 1939. The chicken population reached peaks of nearly 240,000 birds in World War II years, then leveled off to about an average of 200,000 birds. Turkeys have declined from war-time years. With the exception of sheep, other animals--hogs, horses, mules and goats--have been reduced below 1939 figures.

Cattle: Dairy and Beef Farming

Dairy and beef cattle are major sources of farm income in Clark County. The cattle population ranks twelfth in Washington. Cattle are kept on 3,165 farms--over three-fourths of all farms in the county. In the last Census, cattle made up 82 percent of the value of all livestock. Dairy cattle reached a peak number of 31,000 head in 1944, when fluid milk markets in the lower Columbia and Puget Sound areas were at a high-demand point. With consistently high beef prices during World War II and the Korean conflict, beef animals have increased. High levels of employment in recent years have caused many part-time farmers to abandon small dairy herds for beef stock which require less labor than handling dairy stock. Clark has continued to hold the position of fifth in Washington dairying, because of its location near Portland. In recent years about 1,000 producers have been selling whole milk and cream, with total sales grossing about \$3,250,000 per year. Sales of live cattle and calves were made by about 1,500 farms in 1954 with a gross return of nearly \$1,000,000.

Most of the cattle are in the western half of the county in the lower terraces above flood level of the Columbia and Lewis River Valleys. Major cattle districts are the East Fork Valley of the Lewis River, Cedar Creek Valley

Table 28.- Dairy Products Sold From Farms
Clark County, 1920-1954.

Year	Whole Milk Sold From Farms		Cream Sold From Farms		Butter Sold From Farms	
	(pounds)	(dollars)	(pounds)	(dollars)	(pounds)	(dollars)
1920	12,840,360	--	1,320,667	--	57,881	17,364
1929	47,549,245	\$1,050,500	650,244	\$318,620	7,961	3,821
1939	62,681,550	1,880,430	560,015	224,000	11,147	3,341
1944	79,264,368	3,408,350	107,327	53,660	5,132	2,566
1949	79,729,623	3,460,293	138,434	85,509	--	--
1954	78,639,457	3,242,173	147,139	84,287	--	--

Source: U.S. Census, Agriculture.

and the Columbia River benchlands surrounding La Center and Ridgefield. This northwestern Clark County dairy belt contains about 13,500 head of cattle of which about 6,000 head are dairy cattle. Beef and dairy herds as an average are small, ranging from 5 to 20 head per farm. The Salmon Creek Valley, between Battle Ground and Vancouver, is another intensive area, containing 5,830 head distributed over 485 farms, average herd size being 12 head. A second major area is the farming region surrounding Vancouver. Within a ten mile radius of Vancouver there are about 9,000 cattle of which 3,200 are milk cows. Dairy herds tend to be small with most farms having less than five milk cows. The Camas-Washougal Valley area in the southeastern corner of Clark County contains about 8,400 head of cattle of which 2,600 are milk cows. Herds in this area are larger, averaging about 15 head per farm. The upper Lewis River Valley in the northeastern foothill area surrounding Yacolt has 3,500 cattle on 225 farms. Here the main emphasis is on beef cattle because of remoteness from dairy markets and participation by farmers in part-time work.

Table 29.- Livestock Numbers on Farms
Clark County, 1939-1956.

Year	January 1 Numbers on Farms		
	All Cattle (head)	Beef Cattle (head)	Dairy Cattle (head)
1939	29,600	2,700	26,900
1940	30,200	3,100	27,100
1941	30,700	1,700	29,000
1942	31,500	1,300	30,200
1943	32,500	2,200	30,300
1944	33,000	2,000	31,000
1945	33,200	2,500	30,700
1946	30,300	1,500	28,800
1947	30,000	3,000	27,000
1948	30,000	4,000	26,000
1949	31,500	4,800	26,700
1950	31,900	4,700	27,200
1951	32,000	5,300	26,700
1952	32,100	7,800	24,300
1953	36,600	10,300	26,300
1954	38,400	12,000	26,400
1955	40,600	14,100	26,500
1956	41,000	13,700	27,300

Source: U.S.D.A., AMS, Estimates Division
State of Washington

Poultry Farming: Chickens, Eggs, Turkeys, Ducks and Geese

Clark is the sixth ranking poultry county of Washington. In dollar value of products sold from farms, poultry raising is the second major type of farming. Sales of eggs, broilers, other meat chickens, turkeys and other poultry returned an estimated \$1,625,140 to Clark County farmers in 1954.

Table 30.- Chickens, Egg Production and Turkeys
Clark County, 1939-1954.

Year	Chickens (birds)	Egg Production (dozens)	Turkeys Raised (birds)
1939	228,929	2,370,226	1,916
1944	239,728	2,404,418	139,198
1949	185,968	1,545,976 1/	110,421
1954	211,175	1,824,477 1/	75,544

1/ Includes eggs sold only, not entire production.

Source: U.S. Census, Agriculture.

Commercial egg production is the most valuable part of the poultry industry. About 1,825,000 dozen were produced in 1954 by 825 producers. The number of chickens kept on hand for egg production has ranged between 240,000, a World War II peak in 1945, to about 211,000 in recent years. Production of broilers (fryer chickens) is an increasing specialty directed toward sales in the Portland metropolitan area. It now accounts for one-fourth of the poultry farming income. About 40 producers marketed nearly 545,000 fryers in 1954, a volume sixth highest in the state.

Total Value of Poultry and Poultry Products Sold
in 1954 - \$1,625,140

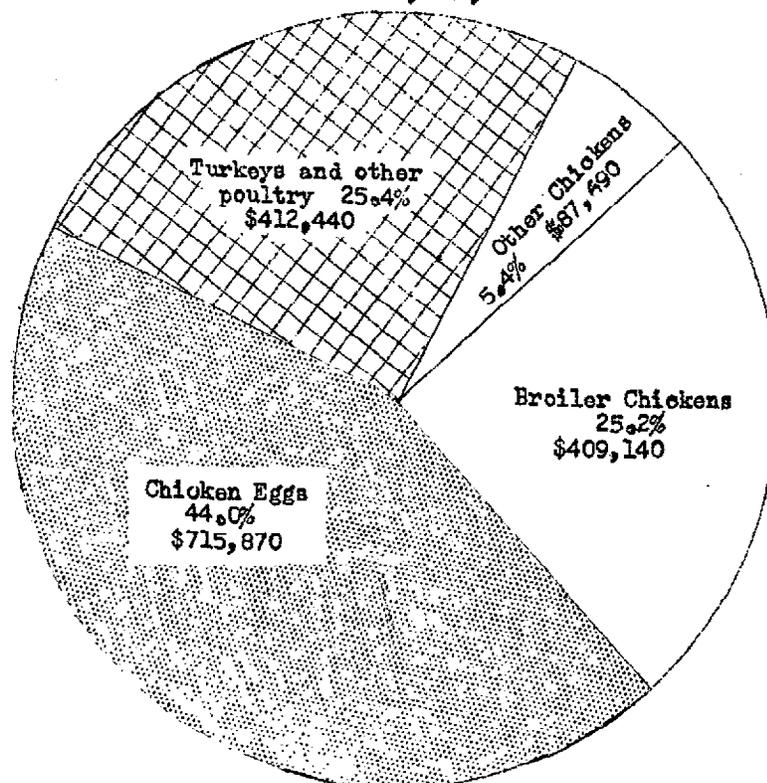


Figure 12.- Divisions of Clark County Poultry Industry
By Products Sold off Farms in 1954.
(Based on U.S. Census, Agriculture.)

Clark County still ranks fourth in Washington turkey production although the industry has declined since its peak years during World War II. During the war over 140,000 turkeys were raised for market each year. By 1954 production was down to about 75,000 birds. Most of the turkeys raised are heavy breeds for the holiday market. About 75 farms produced meat turkeys and 30 specialized in breeding stock, eggs and poults in 1954. Clark is second in Washington production of ducks and geese. About 125 farms keep farm flocks of ducks and geese. In 1954 there were 1,350 ducks and 1,050 geese raised for the nearby urban markets.

Clark County poultry raising is widely distributed over all the farmlands. Areas of greatest concentration are the Brush Prairie-Orchards district and Salmon Creek Valley to the immediate north of Vancouver, the Battle Ground district, the Washougal Valley and the LaCamas Lake district. Small farm flocks are numerous and a considerable amount of the industry is on a part-time farming basis.

Hogs

Clark County is one of the important areas of Washington in the raising and marketing of hogs. It ranked eighth in the state in 1954 with 4,200 hogs on 642 farms. Swine were sold from only 243 farms indicating that a majority of farms keep hogs for home meat consumption. Interest in raising hogs has been steady in recent years, with only a slight decrease since 1939. The Camas area and the farmlands near Vancouver have the greatest number of swine. There are a few feeder operations which are using food wastes from the cities. Hogs as a sideline of dairy farming, using skim milk for feed, have been less important with the trend toward grade A milk production. In 1920 there were 12,500 swine in Clark County, over two-thirds more than in 1954.

Table 31.- Hogs, Sheep, Horses and Mules
Clark County, 1940-1954.

Census Year	Hogs (head)	Sheep (head)	Horses and Mules (head)
1940	5,104	2,602	4,043
1945	3,717	1,458	3,039
1950	3,745	4,224	1,908
1954	4,205	5,614	1,047

Source: U.S. Census, Agriculture.

Horses and Mules

Horses and mules for farm-work and transportation have decreased in the last 30 years, being replaced by tractors, trucks and other machines. There were 5,750 horses and mules in Clark County in 1920 but the Census found only 1,047 head in 1954. Most of the present horses are used for riding. Work or draft horses have become uncommon. Only 90 farms were using horses for farm work power by 1955. Horses are kept by about 500 farms and one to three animals per farm is the average. Only 25 farms a year normally sell horses, and only 41 head were sold during 1954. Horses are evenly distributed throughout the

county but are popular on farms on the outskirts of Vancouver and Camas. Salmon Creek Valley north of Vancouver has the largest number, about 322 head on 250 farms.

Sheep

Sheep have gone up from 2,602 head to 5,614 between 1939 and 1954. This is in contrast to a general decreasing trend of raising sheep in the state. Clark is second behind San Juan County in western Washington and ranks twelfth in the entire state in sheep numbers. In 1939 there were 105 farms keeping sheep, but by 1954 a total of 154 places had flocks. In 1954 about 3,255 sheep and lambs were sold from 100 farms for a return of \$45,800. There were 31,000 pounds of wool shorn in 1954 compared with 17,300 pounds in 1939.

Sheep have become popular on general farms and on tree fruit and poultry farms as a sideline. They are efficient users of hilly pasture in western Clark County. As a rule farm flocks are grazed within fenced pastures, averaging about 36 head each. The terrace lands about Ridgefield, La Center and Salmon Creek form the main sheep raising belt. There are about 2,400 head in this section distributed over 34 farms and averaging 70 head per flock. The Washougal Valley and La Camas Lake district near Camas and Washougal is another important sheep area, containing 25 farms which raise a total of about 630 head. Sheep are common in all the upper portions of the Lewis River Valley.

Goats, Rabbits and Fur Animals

Clark County is an important area in specialized animal industries. Clark is fourth in the state in numbers of farms keeping goats and is sixth in total numbers of these animals. The most recent Census on domestic rabbits and fur bearing animals was in 1950. This placed the county fourth in number of farms raising rabbits and fifth in fur-farming operations. The raising of goats as a sideline is on a downward trend in Clark County as well as over the state in general. Dairy breeds of goats are now kept on less than 150 farms compared with about 550 in 1950. The goat population, however, is greater, being 546 head in 1955 compared with 412 in 1950. Rabbits are the most popular small animals, being kept on over 400 farms. A few rabbitries sell meat animals in the Portland market. Fur farming has been on an increase particularly in ranch mink. Commercial and part-time farms which sell small animals and their products number about 100 and their total gross sales amounted to over \$16,000 per year when last enumerated in 1949.

Bees and Honey

The last agricultural Census of bee-keeping in Washington in 1950 showed that Clark County ranked first in the state in numbers of farms keeping bees and second in total number of hives. Second to Yakima County in bee-keeping, Clark County contained about 300 farms who keep bees. All hives in the county numbered over 5,000. Most of the industry, however, is on a farm-household use basis. Bees also are kept to provide good pollination of fruit trees, berry fields and clover and alfalfa seed crops. Only 45 farms marketed honey according to the Census of 1950. Total sales amounted to about 14,000 pounds valued at \$2,600 in 1949. A few farms which keep over 10 hives and market honey are found in the areas surrounding La Center, Ridgefield and Battle Ground. Larger operators with 40 or more hives are located at Washougal and Vancouver.